



Illustration by Jim Curran

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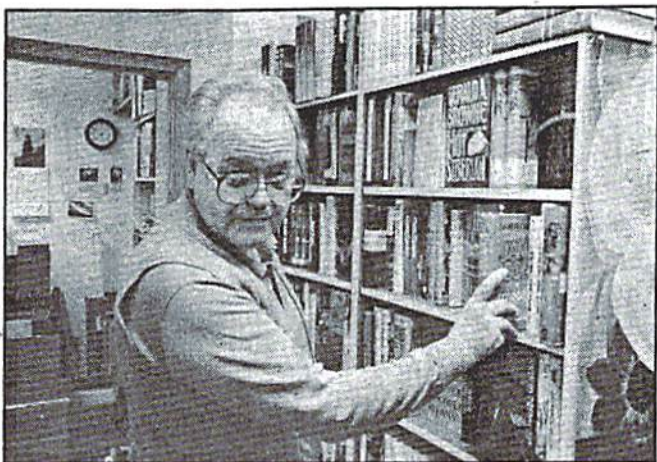
# Goodbye

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all aspects of bookselling, talking and helping others in regards to bookselling, censorship, unfair trade practices and the like.

But all the travel lost its glamour. He said he'd often give 18 lectures in 18 cities within a 10-day span.

"Travel's not all it's cracked up to be," Hale said. Often, he said, he'd find himself mentally, emotionally and physically drained. "I think about all the BLTs I ordered from room service, just to have some time to myself and not be 'on' all the time."



**BOB HALE AT HIS DUXBURY BOOK STORE —**

He likes everything except "the paperwork and paying the bills." (Staff photo by Tom Santiago)

"I held a key position in the book world, and had gained the respect and contacts," Hale said. "Everybody thought I was nuts to want to leave."

He adds that he was surprised to learn that when he left, three people took over his job, and every once in a while, they told him they were overloaded and couldn't conceive how he had done it all before.

"One of the most difficult things for people to give up are the incredible benefits," Hale said. "The adjustment in salary is not that difficult to give up because you're saying goodbye to the higher tax bracket. But you have to start picking up your own retirement and medical insurance costs."

After six years, Hale left the ABA, though he continued to work on several committees affiliated with it. He took on writing assignments for magazines, did some lecturing, as well as some ghost writing.

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Then he bought Westwinds Bookshop in Duxbury. "I like every part of bookselling — the buying, putting them on shelves, displaying them and presenting them to customers," Hale said. "The only things I don't like are the paperwork and paying the bills."

"I wanted to be small enough so I was actively involved in it, and I am," he said. "When I started out, it was a 400 square foot store, then it moved to 900 square feet, now there are plans to make it 1,800. Sales now are about 12 times what they were when I bought it. The main reason is that it is run as a very personalized business."

His friends and former colleagues in New York called him every few months after he left, asking if he had come to his senses yet. Or they would ask if he was ready to come back. Hale said they still consider his new avocation a "hobby."

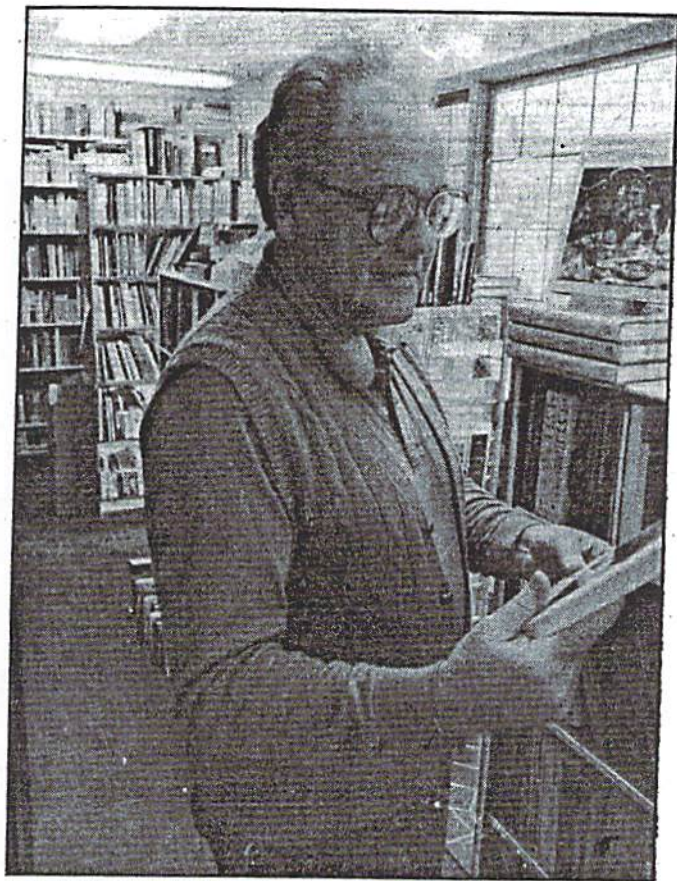
Hale just finished writing a novel, *The Elves at the Edge of the Earth*, based on some incidents with characters in his childhood. The 300-page book, to be published by W.W. Norton of New York, was expected to be completed in April.

"I never again could work for a board of directors. I think it's a burden that a person can only do for so long," he said. "Now I'm my own board of directors."

Of course, being his own boss means more hours now. "There's never enough hours. There's never a time when I have everything done," he said. "There's never a minute of boredom. It's the ongoing excitement, it's the building of a business. Not only that, it's the talk about the

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**BOB HALE** — When he left his old job in the corporate world, they replaced him with three people. (Staff photo by Tom Santiago)

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books, the sharing of ideas."

"Everybody talks about career goals, long-term planning, and where they want to be five years from now," Hale said. "I've had a wonderful life and I've never planned any of it."

### Fantasy to reality

Tom Pugliese worked for seven years as the vice president of an automotive aftermarket products company in Boston. He had a good job, one that allowed him nights and weekends with his family, and was sufficiently rewarding and challenging.

"But there was something missing inside of myself," he said. "There was this desire to use all my talents."

Between 6 and 7 every night he'd be making the commute home to Marlboro. Quickly tiring of the fast food offerings, he'd pass the time on the drive by picturing the type of place he'd like to

drive by, offering a high-quality take-out dinner. "I always liked food," he said.

Pugliese's vision included a place with food of superb quality, reasonably priced, convenient and friendly. For the past 14 months, Pasta Eleganza in Pembroke has been that dream-come-true.

He was making good money, drove a company car, had nights and weekends to himself and plenty of benefits. But his dream became a risk he was willing to take.

An accountant by profession, Pugliese said he quit his job, moved from Marlboro to Marshfield, spent months developing a business plan and, with collateral from his house, secured bank financing.

He opened his business in January 1988, creating what he considers "a cornerstore atmosphere in an upscale environment."

"The timing's never right to take a chance like that, but if you don't take the chance you end up living in a secure environment," Pugliese said. "But there's a bit of resentment because you didn't give it a shot. The worst thing that can happen is that I lose everything, but I could start over in another profession. It might put me back about four years, but it's a chance you've got to be willing to take."

Pugliese said making food for others is much more rewarding than his old job as far as feedback. "It's a feeling that can't be bought," he said. "The feeling that I'm making a 100 percent effort and the word gets out."

Working much longer hours now, including weekends, Pugliese and two other workers make primarily Italian cuisine, including specialties like homemade bread, chicken cacciatore, lobster ravioli, veal marsala and others, all ready to be taken out. He said they also make their own bread, croutons and a soup of the day, as well as specialty sandwiches.

"It's not like selling tires. I can't imagine anyone getting excited over that," Pugliese said. "Everybody likes to eat. Eating is one of the nicest things in life. Eating is an event."

### Cutthroat competition

MacGregor, who holds a doctorate in chemical physics, had been researching the production of molecules in space and in flames. He was working at the University of Chicago and then extended that research at a naval research lab in

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Washington, D.C.

“It was pretty interesting,” he said, “But it's very cutthroat. People are always after your results. Notes get stolen, people want the notoriety.”

The pay was good, and he was working with the federal government. But to do that research effectively, “to become anything at it, you had to spend 12 hours a day, six days a week.”

The breaking point came four years later when he prepared a lecture about his work at a national American Physical Society meeting, and only a dozen people cared to hear his research results.

MacGregor since 1972 has taught physics, math and computer programming at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. If he had stayed in research, he said he'd probably be making double his current salary, but he said he's happy with the choice.

“I love to teach, to get some of these fellows to learn some physics and math,” he said. “I'm excited in the subject.”

MacGregor said teaching allows him much more flexibility, with summers off and a typical six to seven hour working day. He said the pace is easier and the environment is more relaxed.

“Now I'm more of a free agent. I don't really have a boss that's looking directly over my shoulder,” MacGregor said. “There's no competition here.”

Anything they miss or any regrets? Besides the better pay and benefits, not really. Hale said he misses the two-block walk to work and the cultural diversity offered in New York City, as well as some of his international friends he visited regularly. But the pace? No way. They all feel they made the best possible decisions.